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Vaccination Program Appears to Reduce Respiratory Infections Among Recruits

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From U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery Public Affairs



According to a Navy News Service article by Jonathan E. Friedman, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth Public Affairs, the results of giving adenovirus vaccinations to U.S. Navy recruits last October were released Jan. 30, and looked positive.

After a 10-year manufacturing hiatus, the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center (FHCC) reinstituted giving the vaccine to minimize the symptoms of febrile upper respiratory infection.

The average number of infection cases among recruits in 2010 was 93 per week. In 2011, the average was 87 per week. In the first month of 2012, that average was reduced to 23 per week.

In the first week following the vaccination, the rate of febrile upper respiratory infections went from 105 to 63 cases. The next week, it went to 26. After that, there were only 11 recruits who were treated for febrile upper respiratory infection. The vaccine had effectively cut the number of cases by 89.5 percent.

For the entire article visit, http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story_id=65070

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Vaccination Program Appears to Reduce Respiratory Infections Among Recruits

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By Jonathan E. Friedman, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth Public Affairs

NORTH CHICAGO, Ill. (NNS) -- Results of giving adenovirus vaccinations to U.S. Navy recruits last October were released Jan. 30, and looked positive.

After a 10-year manufacturing hiatus, the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center (FHCC) reinstituted giving the vaccine to minimize the symptoms of febrile upper respiratory infection.

The average number of infection cases among recruits in 2010 was 93 per week. In 2011, the average was 87 per week. In the first month of 2012, that average was reduced to 23 per week.

In the first week following the vaccination, the rate of febrile upper respiratory infections went from 105 to 63 cases. The next week, it went to 26. After that, there were only 11 recruits who were treated for febrile upper respiratory infection. The vaccine had effectively cut the number of cases by 89.5 percent.

"The results are undeniable when you look at the numbers," said Lt. Cmdr. Carolyn Winningham, Lovell FHCC preventive medicine officer. "The vaccine is fast, effective and safe. At the end of the day, our job is about keeping U.S. Navy recruits healthy and in training. So, for us, the adenovirus vaccine has been a huge success."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the vaccine, has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration for Department of Defense personnel entering basic training.

Military basic training settings offer a distinctive environment for adenovirus to be transmitted. Prior to the vaccine, the close-quarters atmosphere would often allow an illness to spread quickly, resulting in missed training for the recruits. In turn, if a recruit is sick for too long, expensive training time may need to be lengthened.

While the two-pill vaccination is costly at \$111 per dose, its effectiveness keeps healthy recruits coming into the U.S. Navy without medical delays.

According to Lovell FHCC Head of Occupational Health Medicine Mark Lesko, the Department of Defense invested approximately \$100 million over a 10-year period to bring the vaccine back to military recruits and basic trainees. Lesko explained that recruits have been receiving the vaccine for roughly 25 years, ending in the late 1990s when the original manufacture ceased production of the vaccine due to cost effectiveness.

Although not currently available to the general public, Winningham points out that there are many proactive measures that can be taken to reduce the spread of febrile upper respiratory infection.

"I'm sure many parents would want this type of vaccine for their family members," explained Winningham. "Unfortunately, it's just not available at this time. That said, there are still many preventive measures that each person can take, including hand washing and practicing social distancing."

Winningham explained that social distancing is a practice of maintaining distance from those who are currently ill, which may include staying home from school or work when sick, coughing or sneezing into a sleeve or tissue, or remaining six to eight feet from people who have a virus.

While the results do appear promising, Lesko points out that the long-term outcomes must be monitored.

"The reinstatement of this vaccine is certainly a public health milestone for the Department of Defense," said Lesko. "All indications for us show that adenovirus is effectively gone from our recruit community, and we'll be monitoring to ensure that continues."

The Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center is the nation's first fully integrated medical facility between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense. Established Oct. 1, 2010, the facility integrates all medical care into a federal health care center with a single combined VA and Navy mission, serving military members, veterans, military family members and retirees.

For more information, visit www.navy.mil, www.facebook.com/usnavy, or www.twitter.com/usnavy.

For more news from Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, visit www.navy.mil/local/NMCP/.

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